GEN. ROCHAMBEAU, LEADER OF F.E.F., KNEW HIS TRADE

Hero of Yorktown Was Battle Scarred Veteran Before 1870

70 DAYS ON JOURNEY OVER

French Troops Who Helped Win Our Revolution Won Heart of America First

The land-locked harbor of Brest was the scene of more than its wonted activity. Crowded transports seemed to fill the roadway and even inshore made navigation difficult for the little Breton fishing boats. Soldiers lined the decks, joking; singing; sailors yelled, tugged at lines and let go. The date, it should be mentioned, was May 2, 1780.

For the French troops who, a year and a half later, were to have no mean share in the bottling up and ultimate surrender of Lord Cornwallis at Yorktown—the F.E.F., if you care to call it that—were about to sail for America. It had been expected for a long time that they would sail, but no one had been sure of it until early one March morning in that same year of 1780.

On that March morning a man of 55, with an already glorious military record behind him, was waiting in a Paris dwelling for the carriage that was to take him to his home near Vendôme. He was not particularly concerned about his military record, past or future, at the moment, since the twinges of inflammatory rheumatism rather tended to make him forget everything else. The carriage would soon be ready; already the post-horses were waiting in the courtyard.

Expedition Is Ordered

And at that instant a courier entered the courtyard and changed the course of history—changed it, at least, for Lieutenant-General Jean-Baptiste Donatien de Vimeur, Comte de Rochambeau. The general had to report to Louis XVI at Versailles immediately. The long-discussed expedition to America was to become a fact.

Born at Vendôme, Loir et Cher, not far from the château town of Blois, Rochambeau had become an officer in the French Army at 14, a colonel at 22—just as his friend-to-be, Washington, had done a few years later. He had fought in Flanders and been thrice wounded.

The man who was to lead the F.E.F., then, knew his trade. His American-bound force consisted of 5,000 troops, crowded aboard a fleet that was protected by no destroyers and had no U-boats to fear. It had, of course, the British fleet to look out for, but it carried explicit warnings from His Majesty Louis XVI not to harm the expedition of Captain Cook, Englishman though he was, thought then to be returning from his third scientific expedition to the South Seas, "his expedition having no other object than the progress of human knowledge, and interesting, therefore, all nations." Such was warfare in a day when international law and courtesy were scrupulously honored.

Longer Trip Than Ours

The F.E.F. had a rather longer voyage than any convoy in the A.E.F. has had to date. It was 70 days on the way, somewhat longer than Columbus took in his first crossing. The troops spent much of their time fishing, and, except for several hundred cases of scurvy, enjoyed good health. Two weeks out, Comte de Rochambeau wrote in his journal: "We have no men sick other than those which the sea makes so."

There were a few exciting moments. An English corsair was captured; a squadron of six English vessels was fired on; one transport was lost for a few days in the fogs off the New England coast. It finally showed up at Boston, which was not Base Section No. 1. Base Section No. 1 was Newport, R. I.

Newport was reached on July 11. The city sent up rockets, the Whigs more than the Tories, and the Quakers none at all, wherefore the good people of Newport varied the celebration by breaking a few Quaker windows.

Rochambeau's men went into camp, and in the months that followed set a record for good behavior by strange troops in a strange land that has probably never been beaten perhaps not even by the A.E.F. It was partly discipline, of course; partly respect for an honored and democratic leader, but it was even more their own pure good disposition. Newport, of course, and every part of America they visited fell head over heels in love with them.

"Not a cabbage has been stolen, not a complaint has been heard," wrote Rochambeau after a month. "Not a man has missed roll-call." Apple trees hung over the tents in one spot, their trees laden with fruit, and not an apple disappeared!

Black Days for America

It was good to have such folks around, for the skies loked dark for the newborn republic. Arnold had turned traitor, Gates had been routed in Jersey, Kalb had been killed, the troops of the Pennsylvania line were growing mutinous. It began to look as if the men who had signed the Declaration of Independence might, after all, some day be hanged.

It was not until September, 1780, that Rochambeau first met Washington in the memorable conference at Hartford, Conn. Where should they attack? Washington favored New York; Rochambeau was for the South. The latter counsel finally won, though it was not until June, 1781, that the F.E.F. finally moved. It marched by way of Providence, across Connecticut, and halted north of New York.

Governor Clinton of New York was certain the attack would be on New York and made no move to prevent the onward march of the troops when they made their juncture with the Americans. When it was too late to pursue, he found the movement was not a feint. They really were marching south. At Philadelphia, as all along the line, the French were accorded a tremendous reception. And so they approached Yorktown.

Rochambeau was not new to this business of besieging. He had already been through 14 of them. The story of Yorktown is too well known to bear repeating, although history has perhaps never given another great Frenchman all the credit he deserves for his part in it. He was the Comte de Grasse, whose fleet blocked Chesapeake Bay after defeating the British soundly outside, and thereby aided in plugging the cork well down into the bottle of Lord Cornwallis's hopes.

Cornwallis surrendered on October 19, 1781. He was not, perhaps, such a bad sort; whether he was or not he was down and out at the time. To put it bluntly, he was broke. And the man who lent him a few francs to tide him over was the Comte de Rochambeau.

The war was virtually won, but Rochambeau lingered for another year. On the first anniversary of Yorktown, Washington tendered him a notable dinner, and the whole time he was féted gloriously. Perhaps the most significant tribute he received was that of the Philadelphia Quakers on the occasion of his triumphant return journey.

Further Honors at Home

"General," they addressed him, "it is not on account of thy military qualities that we make thee this visit; those we hold in little esteem; but thou art the friend of mankind, and thy army conducts itself with the utmost order and discipline. It is this which induces us to render thee our respects."

Rochambeau sailed for France in January, 1783, eluding a waiting British warship after the skipper had thrown overboard all his spare masts, and some of the artillery.

Further honors awaited him at home. He received the blue ribbon of the Holy Ghost; he became Governor of Picardy and later a marshal of France. When the French aristocracy generally was thrown into jail, Rochambeau was confined, too, and he escaped with his life from the grim Conciergerie at Paris by appealing to the "citizen president of the revolutionary tribunal" in the name of "my colleague and my friend in the war we made together for the liberty of America."—George Washington.

He died May 10, 1807, at Thoré, near Vendôme. Inscribed on a simple stone of black and white marble is the touching tribute of his loyal wife:

"A model as admirable in his family as in his armies, an enlightened mind, indulgent, ever thinking of the interests of others. . . . His tomb awaits me: before descending to it I have desired to engrave upon it the memory of so many merits and virtues, as a token of gratitude for 50 years of happiness."

Ceremony July 4, 1918

It was at that grave, on July 4, 1918 that a little company of French and Americans gathered to honor the memory of Rochambeau. With representatives of the Commander-in-Chief of the A.E.F., members of the General Staff present, the party proceeded from Blois to Vendôme, where they were met by the mayor and attended memorial services in the little church at Toré, where Rochambeau worshipped.

A wreath was placed on the grave with fitting ceremony, and then the company went to the château, where they lunched and were shown the picture of Rochambeau's wife and son, the sword he carried at Yorktown, the eagle of the Cincinnati, and the portrait of Washington sent the great Frenchman by his great American brother in arms.

ME AND MY PAL

SITTING ON CLOUDS NOT THEIR STYLE

Five American Flyers Go on Little Hunt for Excitement

BRISK CHURCH TOWER GO

Chasing Balloons Down Good Fun While It Lasts, but Boche Quits

Ornithologists haven't scientifically examined and classified the aviator yet, but when, in the natural process of evolution, he sprouts pin feathers and a tail, they will catalogue him, along with the bald-headed eagle and the setting hen, as a belligerent bird apt to suffer from ennui unless engaged in combat.

Talk about indignant doughboys guarding lumber piles in the S.O.S. They aren't half so fretful as the aviator.

There is a picturesque little church behind the enemy lines which isn't as picturesque as it used to be—five weary German observation balloon crews, a baffled Boche intelligence officer, a puzzled Boche machine gun crew, five new American aviators, and a story about them all which illustrates the point.

The Yankee airmen, being novices in combat fighting, were assigned to patrol duty behind a certain sector. Their job was to sail around within the Allied line and chase off any Hun observers that got inquisitive. They were forbidden to cross No Man's Land unless in pursuit.

The only thing wrong with the job was that no Germans appeared—at least, not often enough to make it worth while. There was nothing to do but loaf around in circles for the whole two-hour trick in the air that each of them did two or three times a day. "Sitting on the clouds," the airmen call it.

After five days the men were jaded with inaction. They were under French command and they pleaded to their commanding officer for action.

He condescended to give them permission to fly in their off duty hours for machine gun practice. There was a ground target a few miles away that they could fire at or they could release small balloons and get experience in hitting an object in the air.

On the first day after getting this permission, one of the airmen came down from his patrol, inspected his machine gun and went up again. But he didn't go to the machine gun range and he didn't release any balloons to chase around in the ether.

Heads for German Line

He headed for the German line. He crossed it at a point where the Germans seemed to be anxious to keep posted on what was going on on the Allied side, for they had six observation balloons along eight or ten miles of front.

He made for one of the balloons. The observer took to his parachute and the balloon was pulled down before the youngster got within range. He flew at the second balloon. The same thing happened. He continued on down the line and the other four were hauled down abruptly. He couldn't get within firing range, but he got them all out of the air.

He returned to his own side of the line, circled for an hour and went back. The balloons were up again, but as soon as the Germans saw him coming they all started down.

He went back to the airdrome and told his four friends. They, too, decided to go after the balloons. For four days the five of them kept it up. They never got close enough to get one, but Mr. Boche had a busy time coming down by parachute and pulling the sausages down in a hurry.

On the fifth day there were no more balloons. Fritz had given it up. So the aviators sought excitement elsewhere.

A Lively Church Tower

They found it in a battered village where a German intelligence officer had established himself in a church tower. They circled low and let go at him. The officer made it down the outside—by ladder—in nothing flat.

Next day they went over the town again, to find the same officer ensconced in the same place, this time with a machine gun and crew.

Undaunted, the birdmen attacked again. There was a duel for about 15 minutes in which, so far as known, there were no casualties. The Germans quit.

The performance was repeated on the third day, but on the fourth the German wasn't there. He had abdicated for a less prominent place.

In the meantime, he's probably wondering why the American aviation service is picking on him, the machine gunners are looking at scores of chipped holes in the tower and wondering what it all was about, and the French have recommended the airmen as combat flyers fit for the front.

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CAN YANKS WEAR CROIX DE GUERRE?

Statutes Say Foreign Decorations Must Go to State Department

CONSTITUTION BANS GIFTS

But Are They Going to Come Off? Ask the Man Who Already Owns One

When the first Croix de Guerre were bestowed upon American soldiers, everybody was happy—especially the men who had won them. And then some killjoy came along and spilled the beans.

"It's agin the law," he said, pointing to Sections 3268 and 3269, page 4461, volume four, United States Compiled Statutes.

Sections three two and so forth state that decorations from foreign Governments have to be tendered to the State Department. The inference is that the State Department turns them over to the person they are intended for by whoever gives them.

But that isn't the worst. A Compiled Statute is only a compiled statute, but now along comes the Constitution of the United States, the same constitution that gave Congress the right to levy armies and declare war, and says, in Article II, Section 2, Paragraph 2:

No Presents or Emoluments

"No title of nobility shall be granted by the United States: And no person holding any office of profit or trust under them shall, without the consent of Congress, accept of any present, emolument, office, or title, of any kind whatever, from any king, prince, or foreign state."

Do the Croix de Guerre come off? Hold! The reprieve! On March 26 1918, there was introduced in Congress a resolution which will grant to all members of the military and naval forces of the United States authority to accept decorations conferred upon them by any of the Governments of the Allies. This resolution was in accordance with a recommendation made by the Commander-in-Chief, A.E.F., when the first Croix de Guerre were awarded.

That resolution, at last reports, was awaiting passage. There is, of course, not the slightest doubt that it will eventually pass.

But until then—is anybody going to fly in the face of the Consitution by continuing to wear the Croix de Guerre? Our answer is that, if anybody does, and if the Supreme Court hears about it, it will remark what a fine day it is, forget for a couple of seconds that there is such a thing as the Constitution, and say, "Next!"

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[BY CABLE TO THE STARS AND STRIPES]

AMERICA, July 11.—The Government has made surprise visits at establishments engaged on war contracts, swooping on them at a previously arranged moment simultaneously throughout the country, and seized the books and papers in a determined effort to eliminate profiteers who act as middlemen and otherwise for contingent fees.

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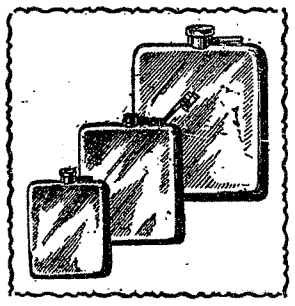

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